

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-23 are currently pending. Claims 1, 3, 10, 12, and 19-22 have been amended by the present amendment. The changes to the claims are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,166,444 to Cukor et al. (hereinafter “the ‘444 patent”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,910,896 to Hahn-Carlson (hereinafter “the ‘896 patent”) and U.S. Patent No. 5,475,851 to Kodosky et al. (hereinafter “the ‘851 patent”); and Claim 23 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the ‘444, ‘896, and ‘851 patents, further in view of the Pure PDF reference (hereinafter “Pure PDF”).

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the interview granted Applicants’ representative on April 19, 2007, at which time a proposed amendment to Claim 1 was discussed. In particular, Applicants discussed amending Claim 1 to clarify that the data output step further comprises displaying, on a display device of the terminal based on the obtained data, a diagram illustrating the status of the transfer of the goods. At the conclusion of the interview, the Examiner indicated that the proposed amendment would overcome the outstanding rejection of the claims.

Amended Claim 1 is directed to a physical distribution method, comprising: (1) an image data generation step for generating image data of a plurality of types of documents on which a condition for exporting or importing goods is described, the image data generation step generating the image data upon reception of the documents obtained as a result of execution of a physical distribution step; (2) an image data storage step for storing the image data generated in the image data generation step to be associated with the goods to a freight

tracking information database, upon generation of the image database; (3) a document data storage step for storing document data described on the document to the freight tracking information database in association with the goods, upon generation of the image data, the document data to be associated with the goods; (4) an identification data storage step for storing identification data that identifies a party concerned with export or import of the goods among, in addition to a consignor and a consignee, a number of parties concerned with export or import of the goods; and (5) a data output step, when the party concerned specifies data relating to goods, for obtaining image data or document data of the data stored, in the freight tracking information database, in association with the corresponding specified data in the stored document data, and for outputting the obtained data. Further, Claim 1 clarifies that the data output step includes the steps of, based on the decided range and the specified data relating to goods, obtaining image data of an associated one or a plurality of documents, and outputting the image data or the document data to a terminal of the concerned party, to thereby display a status of a transfer of the goods, on the terminal of the concerned party. Further, Claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the data output step further comprises displaying, on a display device of the terminal based on the obtained data, a diagram illustrating the status of the transfer of the goods. The changes to Claim 1 are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.¹

Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is rendered moot by the present amendment to Claim 1.

Regarding the rejection of Claim 1, the Office Action asserts that the '444 patent discloses everything in Claim 1 with the exception of storing identification data that identifies a party concerned, and outputting image data or the document data to a terminal of the concerned party, and relies on the '896 and '851 patents to remedy those deficiencies.

¹ See, e.g., Figure 7 and the discussion related thereto in the specification.

The '444 patent is directed to a system for image processing of documents generated in shipping transactions, the system including remote scanning stations 10 and an image file server 13. The '444 patent discloses that the document images can be captured by scanners at a plurality of remote locations, while the images of the shipping documents can be reviewed at a plurality of image processing stations 18. Thus, the '444 system allows for the printing of transaction invoices from the image data and a database along with a hard copy of any shipping document images that are to accompany the invoices. However, Applicants respectfully submit that the '444 patent fails to disclose the step of outputting image data or document data to a terminal of a concerned party to thereby display a status of the transfer of the goods on a terminal of the concerned party, as recited in Claim 1. Further, Applicants respectfully submit that the '444 patent fails to disclose the step of displaying, on a display device of the terminal based on the obtained data, a diagram illustrating the status of the transfer of the goods, as recited in amended Claim 1. In this regard, Applicants respectfully submit that Figure 1 of the '444 patent is merely a system diagram of the '444 invention. Figure 1 of the '444 patent clearly is not a diagram displayed on a display device of a terminal that illustrates a status of a transfer of goods, as required by Claim 1. The diagram of Figure 1 is not displayed to a concerned party at a terminal. Rather, Figure 1 of the '444 patent is merely a system level diagram showing the interrelationships of the hardware elements of the '444 system.

The '896 patent is directed to a computer processing system for tracking a shipment transaction involving a shipper and a carrier. As shown in Figure 1, the '896 patent discloses a central processor 40 that receives transaction information from a data processing device 34 associated with the shipper 20. The transaction information, which is listed in Table 1 of the '896 patent, is maintained by the central processor 40, which allows access to the information by the shipper 20 and the carrier 22.

However, Applicants respectfully submit that the '896 patent fails to disclose the step of outputting image data or document data to a terminal of a concerned party to thereby display a status of the transfer of goods on the terminal of the concerned part, as recited in Claim 1. Further, Applicants respectfully submit that the '896 patent fails to disclose the step of displaying, on a display device of the terminal based on the obtained data, a diagram illustrating the status of the transfer of the goods, as recited in amended Claim 1.

The '851 patent is directed to a method for programming a computer system that includes a video display to create a virtual instrument. However, Applicants respectfully submit that the '851 patent is unrelated to a physical distribution business management method. Further, Applicants respectfully submit that the '851 patent fails to disclose the step of outputting image data or document data to a terminal of a concerned party to thereby display the status of the transfer of the goods on the terminal of the concerned party. Further, Applicants respectfully submit that the '851 patent fails to disclose the step of displaying, on a display device of the terminal of the concerned party based on the obtained data, a diagram illustrating the status of the transfer of the goods, as recited in amended Claim 1.

Thus, no matter how the teachings of the '444, '896, and '851 patents are combined, the combination does not teach or suggest the step of displaying, on a display device of the terminal based on the obtained data, a diagram illustrating the status of the transfer of the goods, as recited in amended Claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that amended Claim 1 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably defines over any proper combination of the '896, '444, and '851 patents.

Independent Claims 10 and 19-22 recite limitations analogous to the limitations recited in Claim 1. Moreover, Claims 10 and 19-22 have been amended in a manner analogous to the amendment to Claim 1. Accordingly, for reasons analogous to the reasons stated above for the patentability of Claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that the

rejections of Claims 10 and 19-22 (and all associated dependent claims) are rendered moot by the present amendment to the independent claims.

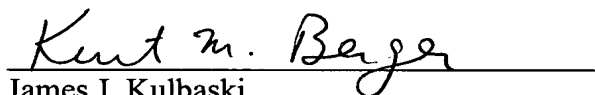
Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claim 23 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is rendered moot by the present amendment to Claim 1. In this regard, Applicants respectfully submit that the Pure PDF reference fails to remedy the deficiencies of the '444, '896, and '851 patents, as discussed above.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1, 10, and 19-22 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably define over any proper combination of the '896 patent, the '444 patent, the '851 patent, and the Pure PDF reference.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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